

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: CARRIE SANDERS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #4 – MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of Grant Applications to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for Transportation Projects Eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission recommend City Council authorize the submission of grant applications.

**BACKGROUND:** In May 2016, City Council approved an update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian chapters of the Transportation Master Plan. These chapters recommended a series of priority projects intended to improve the multimodal network in Alexandria and provide facilities for safer walking and bicycling.

With these applications, staff proposes to apply to VDOT for funds that would allow the implementation of two priority projects that are reflected in City planning documents and have received general support from the community and other City departments, including Planning & Zoning. These projects are currently not funded.

**DISCUSSION:** The first project, the Holmes Run Trail Connector, would provide a connection on the south side of Holmes Run between Ripley Street and North Pickett Street. There is currently an unpaved dirt path and no sidewalk where the proposed trail would be constructed. Because the trail would be located in a Resource Protection Area (RPA), it will be constructed with pervious material. The project is recommended as one of the City's three priority trail projects in the Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter of the Transportation Master Plan and is listed as a recommended project in the Holmes Run Park Plan.

Staff proposes to seek an \$800,000 grant from the VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program fund for the Holmes Run Trail because this program is intended to fund projects that expand non-motorized travel choices and enhance the experience of transportation by improving cultural, historical and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. Projects are evaluated by VDOT based on how the project improves the existing transportation network, the

sponsor's experience administering a federal-aid project, and the project's readiness to proceed. VDOT awarded 21 trail projects across Virginia in 2016. Project submissions should be no more than \$1 million and applications are due November 1, 2016. The Transportation Alternatives Program grant requires a 20% local match. As a result, the City match would be \$160,000, to be paid for with in-house design services at \$60,000 through in-kind matching funds, and \$100,000 of prior year funds from the Complete Streets CIP project.

The second project, located at the intersection of Seminary Road and Howard Street, would provide pedestrian improvements adjacent to INOVA Hospital. Pedestrian improvements could include—but are not limited to—curb extensions, accessibility upgrades, and bus stop enhancements. With 26 crashes at this intersection since 2011 and many observed instances of midblock crossings, enhancements to this intersection are intended to improve the safety for all roadway users. The Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter of the Transportation Master Plan includes a number of pedestrian safety improvements at this location as part of the Seminary Road/Hammond Middle School Case Study Area.

Staff proposes to seek a \$400,000 grant through the VDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program for this project. Funds from this program are intended to improve non-motorized transportation safety. Eligible projects include—but are not limited to—safety improvements at intersections, crosswalks, signs and pavement markings, accessibility features, and traffic calming measures. Projects should cost less than \$500,000 and should reduce crashes or risk potential. Proposed projects are evaluated based on risk factors from documented purpose and need to compete against other similar projects. The grant application is due November 1, 2016. The funding provided through VDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program does not require any matching City funds.